1929

52 T-S.

Monday.

Dearest

I have been enjoying your letter extremely. Then is only today that there's no reason whatever to think it was your drug that did me harm — Elly says I may have had slight flue — but anyhow all the blame is put on Berlin & this would have happened anyhow, though possibly not in such a sudden way. It was very cold, walking at Harwich in a state of apparent intoxication. Also, I took less than the proper dose, & it was from the same ~~that~~ bottle you had taken. I'm much better & am spending the day on the sofa today & not in bed. I intend to begin work on Monday. Elly is rather severe, & I've only seen Helen, who is though less exciting than Mary. The only gossip therefore is rather remote: I daresay you've heard that Angus has now

Got the Nat. Gall. What fine to an unknown man.
Mrs Ritchie has been taken to help – Ayer
she says, is now sunk into complete apathy,
won't try for any job, & says he means to write
plays with her – He works on her feelings &c.
Mrs Partridge is said to be going back to
Carrington (Helen). Lady Carnarvon is dead, after a
lifetime of work among the Albanians. Nelly has
had a complete breach with Lottie & seized her
latch key so that Lottie cant come here.
The police have seized Lawrence's poems in
manuscript in the post – so this letter even
may be taken. Jack Hutch. & Leonard are getting
up a protest. This is all the news.

I have been rather desperate being in bed a fortnight
with this cursed disease, but Berlin was
great fun in many ways – humans & pictures.
Never again though. Even what I see of London
from the window has an incredible dirtiness. Lord!
how nice to see you again! ~~And~~ So do ring up. when you back
I haven't seen Angelica, but hear from Nelly that
she is in great health & spirits
The war taking complete control of everyone. VB

HAMILL 2/10/66

52,
Tavistock Square,
W.C.1
Telephone: Museum 2621

Monday
7th April
1929.

Dearest Dolphin.

This is a business letter. Vita turned up today at Monks, & is very excited about ~~your house~~ 37, which I told her about. Could you send her all details to Long Barn? Harold has written to say he is sending an ultimatum to the Foreign Office — if they wont let him live in London he's going to — I dont know what — I dont suppose he'll do anything. But probably they will want rooms in London. She has a passion for your drawing room: wants to live there:

We are just back from Rodmell; doing the journey, you'll be glad to hear in record time, ~~under two h~~ not over two hours: (not under — how exact I am!) It was perishing cold & divinely lovely; but life in my lodge even in a blanket, is impossible. Philcox came out & drew a sketch of two rooms in a jiffy. So I wait results; & tremble with excitement.

Business again:

Could you let me have your account, if convenient:

including 6 plates, one large green bowl: one bunch of decorative flowers: one small lampshade: do: large for dining room. I am trying to clear off my affairs. Could you tell me how I could make lavender blue? That inconceivable donkey, Doggett, has re-painted the mantelpiece; & dotted it with sea-green. But if I go to a colour shop, should I ask for oil paint? — & is lavender blue a mixture? of what? Perhaps you remember the colour of the blue dots; a tender blue, like the blue of a chalk hill blue, or the sea at a distance, with chalk cliffs in the foreground.

Thanks to you I have now to plunge into society. You have thrown me on the streets — Sibyl is on me. I must dine with her & buy silk stockings. They cost about 14/6. Unless I can wear two old pairs: all your doing: & then there's Hugh Walpole tomorrow. I am aging rapidly & require a contemplative life; with young things in the distance. I am going to write to Quentin–Claudian, I should say; whose letters are the best I know. How he can paint that gets off into the eternal mandoring of paint I know not. I daresay you are all as happy as grigs. Leonard can't get off his jury; & there was a great excitement at Rodmell when a mongoose was seen running up the stairs as we sat at lunch. It belongs to a village woman. Owing to a Labour meeting held in the drawing room, it discovered the hot cupboard, where it now lives. I had something of the utmost importance to say; but cant remember what — B.

2/10/68

Hugh told me a remarkable story that his mother was a Sapphist (amateur) & confessed it to him at the age of 60, & so died, without any soul knowing — she entreated him to preserve her fame with the Bishop — Hugh then revealed his tastes; they went to Mentone, he nursed her: she died. And this in a high church clergy family

121a

52 Tavistock Sqre.

12th April
1929

Dearest Dolphin

This is not a letter because I dont think I shall have any time to finish it. More greed for [illegible] makes me file my pen, which is one of the chief horrors of a writers life (you know I have a cheap steel pen, bought years ago, & when I can get no more nibs — they are sold in Farringdon Market, — I have to stop writing) But Julian will be gone already. ~~He~~ The Keynes's are back, have been heard, but not seen. People still seem to be away & this bitter; indeed it snowed yesterday; & I was just thinking that I was coming home to tea about Christmas time this afternoon, it was so black & so many lamps were lit when I picked up a primrose on the pavement outside Eddie Marshes flat in Grays Inn. This is my desolate state, to range about London with Pinker instead of having tea with you.

I believe I've found Angus a job — to be Secretary to Hugh Walpole. Its only 4 months of the year; but its only 2 hours in the morning, & £4 a week. Anyhow. Hugh wants to see him or but I've not heard from Angus. & no

doubt that old Bus horse (Angus) will be too cantankerous. Hugh requires someone not thin in the face, nor supercilious. He must be over a certain age so as to avoid scandal, & discreet, because Hugh confides everything. If suitable, Hugh said, much more might come of it. I had 3 hours talk alone with him, largely about the state of his soul, which is very dicky — because he can't help liking to be a success; but then nobody, like Vanessa, ever reads him; so what's the good of it? Yet perhaps, as he's only 45 & 3 months, he may yet reform. His father died over the teapot the other night, was so heavy they had to coffin him in his arm chair. His daughter went out to answer the front door bell to a young curate — came back to find the Bishop holding a piece of bread & butter, dead. The worst of it is, the Bishop hasn't left a penny: so Hugh has his family to support: in fact he now has 12 people, mostly singers, I gathered, to support; none of them related. But I There is something of the Curate in him: something else to tell you. Daresay I must think of something else to tell you.

Raymond was here to tea yesterday, & a young lady from France who has the [illegible] 2 translate Norman Douglas, who wears a bag-glass; — the better to see & to prance — I don't know why I've made up this rhyme; she's a tribute to the romantic power of Dolph & Dog across the sea. Raymond & Mlle — so chattered we were half dead. By the way Mr. Mansfield is groaning; I hear, under the burden of Morgan, Raymond (who's staying with him) & another gent. Coming to night. I daresay Mr. M. will die in the basement. I've not heard anything from Mr

Drawn, nor yet from Mr. Peck. What Raymond
said about Elie I daren't repeat for
fear of ~~to~~ Eavesdroppers. Cabin this
instantly. But you will have left the
Key in the Glass which holds, & one .
held your small hogshair brushes on
the verandah. Have you
settled anything about Grace's future?
I ask with a eager which I must at
present conceal. I am asked to
meet Mary at Sibyl's, but have refused.
If you want an amazing book of
memoirs, rather randy & rollicky, I
advise The retrospections of
Dorothea Herbert - She lived in
Ireland at the end of the 18th
Century, & talks as you might of the
Chamber pot & how the gentlemen
laughed when they saw the stream
trickle through the door.

No news of Roger, but I

1216

saw his door open this afternoon when I came back with Pinker, having seen the primrose on the pavement. I cant tell you how bitter & autumnal it is; not a leaf out; many indeed have gone in. And the snow falls in my heart too, slow soft flakes, salt tasting with tears. Why? Ah hah! Dolphin being a beast covered with brine who never shed a tear dont know the meaning of this phrase. And Duncan, whom I adore, is cased in oil silk from the assault of all elements. The two of you swim seal like through the waves. However I adore you both, & must now go up to my dinner; poor poor Singe: Does Angelica ever ask after me? I'm sending her a little present of clear jet across the water.

Please write fully & freely & frequently.

VB

HAMILL 2/10/68

will send cheque & write again in a day or two.

123a

Monks House
Rodmell.

April 24th
1929

Dearest Dolphin,

I am overwhelmed, indeed touched to the point of tears by your generosity. Vilest of vile animals to have such a scheme to spring on me! All the blue sorts of Dolphins are devils. But, on consideration, through my tears, I consulted Leonard; & what he says is that if you gave me the things, then we could never ask you to do us furniture again. And he is going to ask you to make him two tables — & there are other things I want. This being so, he says it would be best for everybody if I paid you what he thinks a very low price, & I think much too low: that is £25 for your share. As you would certainly charge a proper client like Dotty much more, I shall still think the chairs &c. almost a gift. I may tell you I get pleasure of at least three sorts every day: comfort; aesthetic; snob. Everyone who comes throws up their hands — says where do you get these lovely things? And I

- 2 -

123a v

feel my gorge swell — for of course I don't deny that in
aesthetics, about chairs & covers, I am so wholly
suburban I am ashamed.

There is a great deal to tell you; & the light is fading.
It's a very cold day — not a single hot day yet — &
here we are marooned. We came down without a
hitch last night — this morning, going into Lewes, the
car stuck on a hill. By dint of shoving, we reached
Martins, where they found that our clutch was burnt out,
owing to mal-adjustment, & it will take two or three
days to mend. So we must go up tomorrow by train —
a profound sorrow to Lean Leonard. NYPL He thinks of buying a
second car to keep ~~at~~ in case of emergency.
Now I daresay your Citroen is a perfect angel.
Julian came in, very late, — we had expected him
to dine — but Fred caught him & they got talking.
He has got thinner, I thought; there was a lot he
he said about cars, also about Apostles. He is
growing like a crab — I mean he is only half
covered with shell: he is very queer; one finds
him noticing, & feeling, & & talking up what
last year was imperceptible to him. We argued
about poetry as usual. & he said he has

1236

written a long essay on poetry, which he is sending us.
The Bell sociability is so odd, mixed with the Stephen
integrity. I daresay he'll give you a lot of trouble before
he's done — he is too charming & violent & gifted altogether:
& in love with you, into the bargain. It is very exciting —
the extreme potency of your Brats: they might have been
nincompoops — instead of bubbling & boiling & frizzling
like so many pans of sausages on the fire. (I am just
about to cook an omelette) I am so lost without any
young life that I meditate plunging into Ann — only
what would happen?

Then there's the superb story of Angus. Would you
believe it — he havered & hesitated to such an extent that
Hugh thought he didn't want it, & has engaged a
Captain? Now of course Angus is in an awful
fuss: ~~[illegible]~~ came round to see Leonard; says that both ~~the~~ his
other jobs have fallen through, & he never meant to
had hesitated — all he said was that of course Hugh's
job wouldn't do for a permanency, & he might wish
to get something else. ~~[illegible]~~ I did my best to
impress upon him that it would lead to anything — for
so it would — but his Caution is such that he resembles
like a slobbering mastiff, & so will lose every
chance that you offer. Anyhow I shall never stir
a finger for him again. This was worth at least
£500 a year for life. On top of this, Miss

1236v

Ritchie came to Leonard to beg him to tell Angus she can't
dedicate her life to writing plays with him — So Leonard
had a confidential walk in the Square; & Angus
hummed & hawed, & says he's now heard of something
at Agnews. He is incredible — the truth is, he enjoys —
life at large, & thinks his old mother ought to support
him, solely for the shape of his nose. Also he thinks
that he can write; he thinks that he can ~~[illegible]~~ correct
what Alice Ritchie puts wrong — which he does, she says, very
neatly in purple ink; & drives her mad.

Men, Lord Alfred Douglas threatens Leonard & the Nation
with a libel action, because of an article Leonard
wrote. So we may be in Court again. Leonard
is going to defend himself. As Lord A. is mad, nobody
knows if he means it or not; Maynard didn't want
his letter published, — Lord A's letter — but it is now going to
be published, so that he can't have any excuse to
say that the Nation is afraid. There is so much
to say that I am dribbling along, in the dark. What's
the use of ever leaving London? It pelts — it
whistles. All London is coming to life. Tomorrow
I lunch with Sibyl to meet the Nicolsons; which I
do to get out of dining. About 37 — we
think you should certainly stick to the Premium, as their

part of the rent. I will hand on the other facts. The truth is, Harold doesn't know his own mind; but is perpetually, I gather, about diplomacy altogether; still, as he hasn't a penny & now has to support his mother, the plunge is rather stiff. Christabel asked us to the Opera — she is coming to life. On the other hand, Mrs Clifford is dead. I've just written a wretched little letter to Ethel. She is buried today, & I can't go. We had Braithwaite to dinner — & Miss Leys Lloyd Irvine — a pretty young intellectual, undebauched, to whom we talked of every subject — sodomy, & copulation; & at any moment, though he roared like a bull, I thought Richard was going to burst into tears. The modern way of being widowed is alarming — she took his old mother to Venice & to cheer her up, she came out with the most astonishing indecencies, cartoons or uncartoons. "There ought to be rubber women" she said, ~~& then that~~ when women are cold. Also she told him how much blood shed there was in marriage — this after complete reticence for 35 years. He mixed her water with wine, she being a teetotaller. What I find alarming is the sudden way of saying "Oh my future wont bear thinking on —" and then roaring with laughter. And we had William Plomer who is going to be a great novelist to dine — fresh from Japan — a very spruce & yet imaginative young man, born of parents in

123c

Guinier – I think I shall have to ask him here & bring him to Charleston to meet you. But what a mix up we are! – I pretending to be an Aunt & then a contemporary – I never know which. He says that they dont talk with much freedom in Guinier.

My great excitement is – I needn't say – building. Philcox will build two rooms for £320 – whereas Ken Kennedy said it would be £450 for one. And he will do them by August – which is doubtful – So I'm ferreting my brains to think of doors & windows – handles & cupboards. They're to be built on next the Kitchen where the pears are – of brick, I think, painted white. Please make suggestions.

Here is dinner. I am devastated by the dull tosher of this letter. I let it go too long, & so I had too much to say, & could not put in any amusing or interesting things. So you must answer at once, in order that I may write at once; for letters are ruined by facts. Lord! another must be added. I dont know about coming. I shall try to come, say the first fortnight in June; but L. rather inclines to motor out towards Perpignan – aigh & not come to Cassis. But I dont think I can go without Welfshneing till August; even if I have my husband. Tell Jean I hope to come anyhow myself about then. Write quick. B.